

Message Text

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16

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 USPS-01 AGR-05 OC-06 CCO-00 FAA-00

DOT-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /079 W
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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0250

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DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & AALC NEW YORK

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, ET

SUBJECT: POST OFFICE WORKERS STRIKE IN ADDIS ABABA

1. ETHIOPIAN POST OFFICE WORKERS IN ADDIS ABABA WENT ON STRIKE FRIDAY, JULY 9. ALLEGED REASON FOR STRIKE WAS TO DEMAND RELEASE OF ARRESTED POSTAL WORKERS UNION LEADERS. WE DO NOT KNOW THE NAMES NOR THE NUMBER OF THOSE BEING HELD.

2. YEMANE ARAYA, HEAD OF LABOR DEPARTMENT IN MIN LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, TOLD EMBOFF JULY 14 THAT STRIKE HAD BEEN SETTLED AND WORKERS WOULD REOPEN POST OFFICE JULY 15. POST OFFICE IS INDEED OPEN TODAY. WE DO NOT YET KNOW TERMS OF SETTLEMENT, I.E., WHETHER ANY UNION LEADERS WERE RELEASED. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS RUMOR THAT TELECOMMUNICATIONS WORKERS WOULD JOIN POSTAL WORKERS IN SYMPATHY STRIKE, THIS NEVER MATERIALIZED.

3. DURING PAST TWO MONTHS, THERE HAS BEEN INTERMITTENT LABOR UNREST AT HVA (WONJI) SUGAR ESTATE, AMONG ASSAB PORT

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WORKERS, AMONG CASUAL LABOR IN THE COFFEE-CLEANING FIELD,

AND IN A FEW OTHER AREAS. USUAL CAUSE OF PROBLEM IS SEASONAL LABORERS' DEMAND FOR PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT. IN MOST CASES THAT WE HAVE HEARD OF, INCLUDING THE HVA AND COFFEE DISPUTES, GOVERNMENT HAS APPROVED MANAGEMENT DECISION NOT TO HIRE CASUAL HIGH-SEASON LABORERS ON PERMANENT BASIS. ASSAB PROBLEM WAS DUE TO MARITIME UNIONS (GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES) DEMANDS FOR HIGHER WAGES TO KEEP PACE WITH RAPIDLY RISING COST OF LIVING. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, WAGE DEMANDS WERE REFUSED. IN GENERAL, EMPLOYEES IN PRIVATE ENTERPRISES HAVE SECURED WAGE INCREASES SINCE BEGINNING OF YEAR IN THE VICINTIY OF 10 PERCENT WHILE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES HAVE RECEIVED LITTLE OR NO PAY INCREASE. COST OF LIVING IN ADDIS ABABA DURING THE SAME PERIOD HAS RISEN BY 30 PERCENT. THIS IS ONE OF THE REASONS FOR LOWER MORALE AND FALLING PRODUCTIVITY IN SUCH GOVERNMENT CORPORATIONS AS ETHIOPIAN AIR LINES.
TIENKEN

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED AALC NEW YORK.

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